

Committee on Children

Connecticut General Assembly

Thursday, February 27, 2014

Public Hearing to Discuss Governor's Bill No. 24
An act concerning the governor's recommendations regarding
electronic nicotine delivery systems and youth smoking prevention

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on this important measure. We applaud your effort here today, and I want to voice support for Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy's proposal to ban the sale of vapor products to minors, and to prohibit youth use and possession of vapor products.

As background, R.J. Reynolds Vapor Company is a subsidiary of Reynolds American Inc., the parent company of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, the second-largest U.S. tobacco company. RAI's companies also include American Snuff Company, the second-largest manufacturer of smoke-free tobacco products; Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company, manufacturers of Natural American Spirit tobacco products; and Nicovum USA and Nicovum AB, which market innovative nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products in the U.S. and Sweden, respectively, under the Zonnic brand name.

All of our companies are guided by a strong belief that minors should never use any form of tobacco or tobacco-derived nicotine products, including vapor products, also known as e-cigarettes.

Vapor products are a new form of tobacco-derived product. Industry analysts have stated that the vapor business is worth about \$2 billion a year. It is appropriate for legislators to seriously consider the most responsible manner in which to treat these products, and we absolutely share in your interest in keeping these products out of the hands of minors.

Connecticut state law currently prohibits anyone from selling or giving tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18. The law specifically names cigars, cigarettes, cigarette papers or wrappers and tobacco in any form, but it does not include the new e-cigarettes, which were introduced into the market around 2006. The current law also provides for conviction of a gross misdemeanor for anyone violating this law.

Vapor products are fast emerging as a non-combustible alternative to smoking traditional cigarettes, but they still contain nicotine, which is addictive and, therefore, not appropriate for use by

minors. These vapor products are being sold in more and more stores, and are also easily available online.

This bill would properly define vapor products and would make it illegal for anyone to sell or give a vapor product to anyone under the age of 18. Anyone convicted of doing so would be found guilty of a gross misdemeanor, which we believe would act as a deterrent.

RAI and its operating companies believe that reducing youth tobacco use is essential for the integrity of our businesses. Significant headway has been made in dramatically reducing teen smoking over the past 20 years, but we believe that more can, and should, be done to further reduce youth tobacco use. And, as part of our strategy to transform the tobacco industry, we are working to accelerate the decline in youth tobacco use through many corporate, educational and legislative initiatives. We're especially proud of our support for the evidenced-based Right Decisions Right Now online youth tobacco prevention program, which is available free of charge to educators, parents and community groups.

Governor's Bill No. 24 is a very necessary step to close the legal loophole on youth tobacco use and strengthen youth tobacco prevention in this state, and I urge legislators to adopt it without reservation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.